

Postmarks *Compiled by SSG Alberto Betancourt*

From Army Posts Around the World

Fort Knox, Ky.

Canadians Train at Fort Knox

SPRING break for some Canadian army reservists is traditionally a time for sun, fun, and an intensive week of training south of the border.

This year more than 1,300 Canadian soldiers traveled to Fort Knox, Ky., to participate in Exercise Bold Venture.

Brig. Gen. Greg Young, the Canadian army's deputy commander in Ontario, said the exercise covered everything from training on the obstacle and bayonet courses to conducting an all-out "assault" on a mock village at the Urban Combat Course.

"Training soldiers to fight and survive in any environment is a key objective of any major exercise," Young said. "Bold

Venture was designed to provide realistic and challenging training that our soldiers won't soon forget."

For many, the highlight of the exercise was the live-fire infiltration range, where soldiers crawled through 100 meters of sand, over logs under concertina wire. After sunset, the same drill involved overhead live machine-gun fire, complete with flares and explosives that simulated a very realistic battlefield scenario.

"It was very real and very stressful. You can't stand up with live bullets flying six feet above your head," said Pvt. Maurice Nolet.

Young said the state-of-the-art training facilities at Fort Knox are not available in Canada.

"Training in this realistic environment increases the soldiers' morale," Young said. "Although they were physically and mentally exhausted, their sense of accomplishment was very obvious."

He said training at the mock village was especially beneficial for the soldiers.

"The town site brought the training to life", said military police platoon leader 2nd Lt. Brian Pitkin. "The sound of helicopters and mortars contributed to the sense that we were working in an active zone."

Pitkin said training at Fort Knox was so successful, the Canadians are planning to return next year.

Going south to train at U.S. facilities again would suit many reservists just fine, he said.

"I'd like to do this more often, perhaps twice a year," said Cpl. Mike Moorhouse of the Lorne Scots Regiment. "The Americans have great simulators and training aids." — *Capt. Mark Giles, Canadian army reserve Public Affairs Office*

Kuwait

AGF Band Plays Kuwait

A COMPONENT of the Army Ground Forces Band recently made its overseas concert debut at the U.S. Embassy in Kuwait.

The show band "Classix" from the U.S. Army Forces Command at Fort McPherson,

PFC Gustavo Bahena



SFC Polly DesRoches, lead vocalist and noncommissioned officer in charge of the band "Classix," sings "Celebration" during the concert at the U.S. Embassy in Kuwait.

Ga., celebrated the embassy's "National Day" by opening the performance with the national anthem.

"National Day is held at the embassy annually to allow embassy employees to welcome and meet Kuwaiti and foreign-government officials, and members of the business and academic communities," said Molly Phee, an embassy spokeswoman.

After remarks from U.S. Ambassador Richard Jones and Kuwaiti Foreign Minister Shaykh Sabah, the band entertained the crowd with renditions of such well-known tunes as "I Feel Good" and "Celebration," in addition to some original compositions.

"Many of the guests — and the ambassador — said the band was great," said Phee.

Although the band mem-

Sgt. William Wilczewski



A Canadian soldier scans the area while providing security during urban combat training at Fort Knox's Zussman Training Site.

bers were initially invited to play for the event at the embassy, they also entertained U.S. troops at Camp Doha and at a training area in Kuwait.

"We focused on providing troop support," said SFC Polly DesRoches, NCOIC of the band, who also plays flute and sings. "We try to bring them peace through music."

Saxophonist and flute player 1SG Andrew Crudup said they played a variety of patriotic music to boost morale and bring the soldiers a little piece of home.

"I don't think we can do enough for them," said SFC Miguel Torres, trombone player for the band. "We want them to know that they're not forgotten." — *PFC Gustavo Bahena, Coalition Forces Land Component Command PAO*

Kandahar, Afghanistan

AAFES Serves Troops in Afghanistan

LIVING up to its "We go where you go" motto, the Army and Air Force Exchange Service brought a bit of home to Operation Enduring Freedom soldiers serving in Afghanistan.

"When Operation Enduring Freedom started, a message was sent to all AAFES managers, asking for volunteers," said Bill Hullender, manager of the AAFES Kandahar store. "We had more volunteers than we could use."

He said civilian AAFES employees who volunteer for this assignment go on 6-month temporary-duty orders and live in the field with the soldiers.

"We enjoy helping the soldiers. The troops have been waiting for us, and it's a big morale booster," Hullender said. "We bring a little bit of home to the troops in the field."



MAJ Joe Melicher

Members of last year's Army GBRAI team follow the tradition of dipping their bikes' front tires into the Mississippi River upon completion of the 505-mile ride.

Des Moines, Iowa

Soldiers Ride Across Iowa

FOR the second year in a row the Army will participate in the annual Great Bicycle Ride Across Iowa.

Last year, 14 members of the Army's Des Moines Recruiting Battalion completed the seven-day, 505-mile bike ride across the state.

"We constantly heard comments about our jerseys, which displayed the 'Army of One' logo," said MAJ Joe Melicher, a participant

on last year's team. "Fellow riders asked questions about what the Army was like and what opportunities we offered."

CPT Michael Minaudo, adjutant for the Des Moines battalion, said the soldiers are geared up to participate in this year's ride.

"This is a great opportunity to promote the Army," he said. "It's a great team builder and a great way to meet the community."

The 30th annual bike ride takes place this month. — *CPT Lee Zimmermann, Des Moines Recruiting Bn.*

For several months PFC Donald Brewster, from the 101st Airborne Division's 2nd Battalion, 187th Infantry Regiment, had gone without sodas.

"It's great to get some treats. I just wish they also had chocolate," he said.

Other soldiers, including

PV2 Steven Stodsdill, also from 2nd Bn., waited in line for hours to purchase flashlights, magazines and other items.

Several weeks before opening the store, AAFES sent an advance party to survey the service members' needs and wishes. The team determined

where and what kind of facility they would provide, what materials they needed and what items they would sell. They also assembled a management team and placed advance orders, based on the number of troops they would need to serve.

"Supplies are always stocked at another store in the region that has storage capacity," Hullender said. "We also have merchandise shipped here so we can keep our troops supplied."

Since Enduring Freedom began, AAFES has opened stores in five countries.

"Helping soldiers is what AAFES is all about," Hullender said. — *PFC George Allen, 314th Press Camp Headquarters*



PFC George Allen

AAFES manager Bill Hullender sets up merchandise in preparation for the opening of Afghanistan's newest base exchange.